International Journal of Advanced Scientific Research

ISSN: 2456-0421

Impact Factor: RJIF 5.32 www.allscientificjournal.com

Volume 3; Issue 5; September 2018; Page No. 37-44



Study on the causes affected the manifestation of sub culture within the socio-economic milieu of street venders (Special reference to Katharagama Sacred zone in Sri Lanka)

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Abstract

Trends of urbanization in a country as it is directly proportional to varied nature of socio-economic tumults, too. Vending in towns or in sacred areas is a common feature and the majority of these venders involved in businesses in illegally acquired land creating unregulated market environment in contrary to Government regulations. In this respect street venders foster their own subculture for survival. While, Sri Lankan sub culture can be acquainted as one other Eastern Sub culture within the Asian mega culture. It is noticeable that an inheritable socio-economic environment is built by venders based on devotees migrating to sacred sites entailed with religious background. Under this circumstance, different subcultures have been formulated and it was identifiable that through these measures they could secure their long term security and existence. Correspondingly, these subcultural groups entering into clashes with main culture creating various other calamities too. In line with this research Katharagama sacred site was selected also in focus of 78 street venders identified on random basis with preparations to apply questionnaires and interviews also with observations. Among the data collected; the demography, residential status, characteristics of migration, structure and the hereditary nature of employment, family structures, and scales of income derivability were attended among the 78 street venders. Additionally, studies were pursued on their inheritable trade culture within the sub culture, usage of language, daily behavioral pattern, nature of dealing with clients in order to identify varied tendencies, landscapes and the inter-relationships.

Keywords: Katharagama, sacred sites, street venders; sub culture

1. Introduction

Katharagama in Sri Lanka is one of the renowned sacred sites famous for adorations attended by Sinhala and Tamil nationalities also with minimal number of Muslims. It is noticeable that visit of devotees on religious deeds throughout the year is a common factor since there is no predetermined time limits yet, due to the annual festival scheduled for July, each year, those number of devotees grows up. In parallel to the annual festival, rapid increase of migrating business community too is obvious. In addition it is conspicuous that the stimulation of un-permitted traders too, who are operating dispersedly in the surrounding area.

The definition of street vender is the mobile non-store retailer whose operations usually occur by cart or truck. A street vendor's stock may include perishable goods, nonperishable merchandise, or both (Raj, 2011). According to the classification of socio-economic context it is a product of the influence of economic activities and the social process. In this context, the factors subjected for analysis are progress of the societies, stability and the nature of retrogression. Such economic status can be linked with regional economy, national economy or global economy. As explained in the Oxford Dictionary the subculture is define as "a cultural group within a larger culture, often having beliefs or interests at variance with those of the larger culture. The sub culture is also verified as a human group living in a minor cultural background which shows difference from the mother culture. As per the facts revealed, and in line with the principles identified therein, the growth is occurred through varied factors of cultural, political or sexual. When it is considered at global level different countries are originated through different sub cultures. Therein, different facts are based on causes and effects, and in such situation, political stance, background of economic status, religious diversity, professional and social stratification are among the learning factors.

In accordance with the ordinance of Town council in Sri Lanka and as per the interpretation, the pavements of the streets of Town council are sections of the particular street. Accordingly, under the provision of section No. 83, legal action can be executed against those who constrict pavements. In this respect the study area comes under the administration of Provincial Council. Under the provincial council ordinances too, there is no provision to establish business ventures. This study reveals the socio-economic status and the sub cultural characteristics of unlawful traders who started businesses within the sacred site, besides the controlling factors are in force. In particular this research is instigated to identify the changes happening within the socio economic and social contexts and also the constituted sub cultural features originated within the study area owing to the illegal trade complex built, in focus of tourists and selling religious items.

1.2 Research problem

It is apparent that in regions with commercial values and also due to the value of adjoining land, varied groups in association with such land are involved in an adamant competition to initiate their own livelihoods. Also visible that within the said competitive atmosphere varied groups are being organized

within these challenging environment in which the attempt being made to acquire an ownership of properties and to continue the ownership. Across the above said grouping a self-identical sub culture too, is emerged and to which extent such creation would enable those groups to decide to which degree their existence will be assurable? And if there are any attributed features what are those countenances? Is the problem of this research?

2. Objectives

Main Objective

To study the causes be endowed with varied sub cultures due to the socio-economic environment of street hawkers.

Specific Objectives

- To identify family backgrounds and the socio-economic environment of the street traders
- To study whether street traders are constellated into a group
- Identify the sub cultural features of such constellated group
- To ascertain whether those features of their sub culture had effected their dependence

3. Literature Review

Street vending has captured the attention of most people, organizations, Local Authorities and the government. Study carried out on street hawkers within and around Katharagama Sacred town disclosed a series of impediments which were clandestine except in few appearances such as involvement of groups with subcultural characteristics. The revised National Policy for Urban Street Vendors, (2009) elaborates that there are three basic categories of street vendors: (a) stationary; (b) peripatetic and (c) mobile. Stationary vendors are those who carry out vending on a regular basis at a specific location, e.g. those occupying space on the pavements or other public places and/or private areas either open/covered (with implicit or explicit consent) of the authorities. Peripatetic vendors are those who carry out vending on foot and sell their goods and the revised National Policy for Urban Street Vendors, (2009) also defined a street vendor as a person who offers goods or services for sale to the public in a street without having a permanent built-up structure.' Yet in the context of Sri Lanka the venders are not limited their aspirations having started businesses knowing that either the structure or the land is not own by them. But traders in the study area are endeavoring varied actions in most cases in harmful and illegal ways to possess the ownership of occupied buildings/land or the

Certain studies conducted on street hawkers had arrived at conclusions that street traders as 'resources'. Bienefield and Godfrey (1978) contend that hawking includes a large variety of people and activities with different characteristics of organization and location. They suggest that this sector be substantially disaggregated in such a way that its components become analytically significant and that each can be defined in a way which is statistically useful. Disaggregating helps identify those parts of hawking, which have potentials for growth. The above analysis brought up by *Bienefield and Godfrey* on Street hawkers.

Yet, in comparison to the study area in Sri Lanka the above literature is unacceptable. There is also no possibility to street hawkers in sacred sites to behave or to act as problem credators, or to use political powers which is contradictory to the findings of the study in Katahragama.

In concern with the economic tansformation and development desiarable to achieve can be accomplished from the Urban street vendors/ hawkers only after resolving the disparities existing currently within the complicated land ownership, relinquished life styles free of criminal actions and freeded children from alcohol, begging and allowing them to continue education are some of the factors needing attention.

Henning (1975) regards the informal activity (hawkers) as an employer and also a provider of services to the urban population. Child (1973:76) views that the activity has a potential to contribute to economic development as a whole since it is labour intensive, efficient and has a high out-put capital ratio in comparison with the formal sector. He recommends that the growth of the sector can be encouraged. Muench (1977) sees the activities as capable of generating high quantity of employment especially in the cities. Street vending provides employment and income to a large number of traders in Kenya, many of whom are women. In the context of bsunissmen selling items in streets of sacred sites and in holy towns in Sri Lanka needs prior adaptations to resolute ongoing catastrophies.

Somewhat different to Sri Lanka the developed nations in developed countries, have now recognised to integrate hawkers into urban planning. When the controlling measures are concerned several countries empowers the council to prohibit or control peddlers, hawkers or street vendors. It is in accordance with these regulations that the officers keep on ridding the city of the unlicensed hawkers. There is the potential of these informal street activities contributing to and expanding the revenue generation based on the actions of Local Authorities.

Urban Street Vendors were studied by Babu Ramesh. This researcher reviewed the Book which named as *Informal Markets, Livelihood and Politics: Street Vendors in Urban India*. Then he specialized struggles of urban Venders and factors for constructing this vendor's society. It provides a holistic understanding of all major aspects concerning urban street vending, including market structures, profile of workers, livelihood struggles, governance, and policy issues.

Cordaso studied Prepared foods, and the key issues addressed include: policy, regulation, and governance of street food and vendors; production and trade patterns ranging from informal subsistence to modern forms of enterprise; the key role played by female vendors; historical roots and cultural meanings of selling and eating food in the street; food safety and nutrition issues. Many chapters provide case studies from specific cities in different regions of the world.

Striking a Balance between Public Rights and Rights of Street Vendors: an Analysis of Street Vendors in Sri Lanka was written by R. M. T. S. K. Rathnayake. He specified, Informal sector plays a key role in urban economy in developing countries and among them street vendors are a common sight in Sri Lanka. A street vendor is a person engaged in vending of goods, food items or merchandise of everyday use or offering services to the general public, in a street, lane,

sidewalk, footpath, pavement, public park or any other public place or private area, from a temporary built up structure or by moving from place to place. These businesses come under the Pradeshiya Sabha Act No. 15 of 1987 and bylaws made under it. They are illegal according to the present laws and most of the time they operate in busy streets and considered as a nuisance as they obstruct the people. In some urban areas street vending is not per se illegal and street vendors can ply their trade on the pavements by paying a daily tax to the Municipal Council.

However, Street vendors are evicted if the Municipal Council feels that they cause problems to the general public.

According to National Commission on Labour, street vendors are identified as selfemployed workers in the informal sector who offer their labour for selling goods and services on the street without having any permanent built-up structure (Sharit Bhowmik, 2001).

Harlan Dimas (2008), in his paper on "Street Vendors: Urban Problem and Economic Potential" discussed the roots of street vending phenomenon and suggested several street vending management solutions from best practices followed around the world. The paper revealed that street vendors were a big challenge for urban management. The city managers eliminated them as they defaced city sights. Repressive municipal policies toward street vendors with the deployment of the police have been a counterproductive one. The paper suggested a change in the mindset of urban decision makers. Formulation of a good policy like applying "trickledown effect" in street vending, allocating scare capital in the cities to alleviate poverty, micro financing, registration process of small businesses, etc. would make street vendors contribute productively to the society.

4. Methodology

4.1 Study area and Sample

Katharagama Town is located adjoining to the Matara district Boundary and within the District of Monaragala in the Uwa Province of Sri Lanka. This sacred site is consisted by Ruhunu Katharagama temple dedicated to a deity and Kiri Vehera (Stupa / Temple) holy site. Unlike other sacred sites, the most vital specialty of Katharagama which is attracted by both Sinahala Buddhists and the Tamil Hindus In this research Katharagma Religious site is chosen to be the study location. Upon realization of certain evidence that there is a business culture in focus of devotees living in the study area, and in view of that there is whatsoever, ownership for the land, the sample was selected to be 78 males and females

4.2 Data Collection

Basically, the data collection of 78 families was done through a Questionnaire. In subsequent phases, data collection was attended through informal group discussions, observations and insinuating Case studies. Other than the targeted respondents, the team attended data collection through Police officers, Religious leaders, Hindu priests, and by interviewing those visiting Katharagama holy site. Also, a team of selected drivers from the area, Government Officials were contacted as primary sources for specific information related to the objectives of the research. Also in line with the study a Literature Review was brought about referring secondary

sources of information.

4.3 Data Analysis

Analysis of Data gathered was proceeded with the usage of both quantitative and qualitative data. Herein, the quantitative data analysis was attended by converting data into Tables and Graphs by using SPSS, Excel software, while, Qualitative data analysis was accomplished via an explanatory approach.

5. Results and Findings

Based on the sample within the study area the density of the population is illustrated in the Fig No. 1.

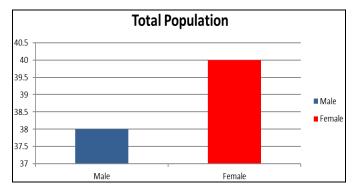


Fig 1: Population within the study area

Age analysis

Age analysis revealed that 84% of age structure represents the labour force.

Table 1: Age structure of communities in the study area

Ages			
Less than 18	1	1.28%	
Between 19 - 25	4	5.13%	
Between 26 - 35	10	12.82%	
Between 36 - 45	16	20.51%	
Between 46 - 55	19	24.36%	
Between 56 - 65	17	21.79%	
Above 66	11	14.10%	
Total	78	100.00%	

Analysis of sample as per the places of birth.

Outcomes of the study divulged that 43% of interviewees were among those migrated to the study area from various regions.

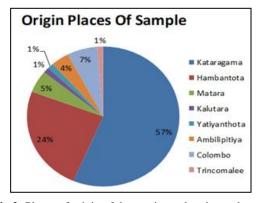


Fig 2: Places of origin of those migrated to the study area

The above study revealed further the causes affected the migrants to move to the study area.

Table 2: Reasons for migrating to the study area

Reasons for the migration			
In focus of Employment	9	26.47%	
Resulted due to the marriage	9	26.47%	
To live with relatives	6	17.65%	
Village re-awakening prog.	1	2.94%	
On business related actions		26.47%	
Total	34	100.00%	

It was shown that 9% of migrants had moved to the study area with direct intention to join the business actions within the sacred site. Yet, another 9 % claimed that they were to be shifted to the study area on seeking employment but they too, indirectly contribute to the business activities related to the sacred site.

Table 3: Time duration of residencies newly settled in the study area

From 1-10 Years	7	20.59%
From 11-20 Years	3	8.82%
From 21-30 Years	7	20.59%
From 31-40 Years	7	20.59%
From 41-50 Years	8	23.53%
From 51-60 Year	0	0.00%
From 61-70 Years	2	5.88%
Total	34	100.00%

As ascertained through above data, 29% people had moved into staudy area within last two decades whereas the balance 71% of the sample were residents in the area during last 30 - 70 years

Table 4: Academic standards – Educational level becomes a vital indicator of the socio-econmic context

Academic standards		
Not attended school	7	8.97%
Educated from $1 - 5^{th}$. Grade	17	21.79%
Educated from 6 Grade to O'level	29	37.18%
Got through O'level		17.95%
Upto A'level		6.41%
Suceeded A'level		2.56%
Graduate		1.28%
Diplom holder		3.85%
Other	0	0.00%

Summarized findings disclosed that only 7% respondents had been succeeded in either A level or higher education which are minimum standards to cope the demands in the job market in Sri Lanaka. The highest academic qualification of the balance 93% is up to A'level. Inadequate educational qualifications had apparently paved the way for the majority of job seekers to centralize with unlicensed or unwarranted businesses.

Table 5: Composition of Marital status of the Sample

Status of Marriage / Civil status			
Married	60	76.92%	
Un-married	7	8.97%	
Widowed	7	8.97%	
Divorced	0	0.00%	
Living together	0	0.00%	
Living separately	4	5.13%	
Total	78	100.00%	

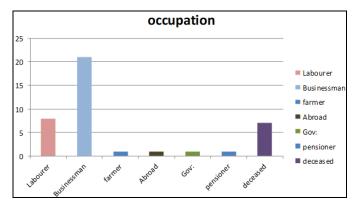


Fig 3: Composition of jobs involved by householders

The part of study on the involvement of jobs by respondents it was exposed that 52% of respondents are involved on businesses associated with the sacred site. Since the hereditary pattern of transferring jobs involved by father to the child, the current involvement of respondents are indicated through the below graph

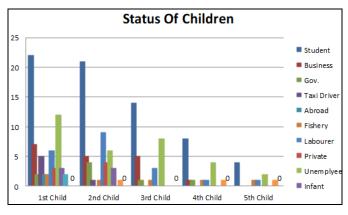


Fig 4: Position of children in concerned with education and employment

At the time of the study, majority of children were continuing their education. As per the rest of the study done in its ascending order revealed that the next category was unemployed youth. The third category illustrates the number of children involved in businesses associated with the sacred site

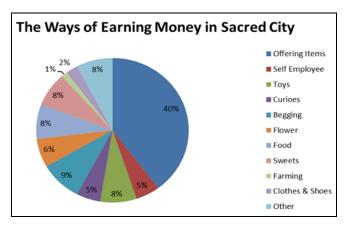


Fig 5: Methods of income being derived within the sacred site

The mainstream of income sources involved by 40 % of the business community is the sale of offering items in which the men and women involved in making flower baskets and to arrange essentials for religious actions (Fresh fruit, Festoons, Flower and joss-sticks etc.). Majority of this category of traders are involved in selling items at the entrance of temple dedicated to a deity of Katharagama. Higher number of others selling short-eats and sweets too, are assembled here. The majority of un-licensed business men are selling flower at the close proximity of Kiriwehera Temple.

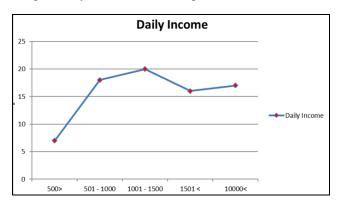


Fig 6: Structured dissemination of Daily Income of interviewed businessmen

While, a miniature category of 9% of sellers earn daily income less than Rs. 500/=, the balance of businessmen (91%) are earning more than Rs. 500/= daily. Consequently, 21% of those responded earn daily income beyond Rs. 10,000/=.

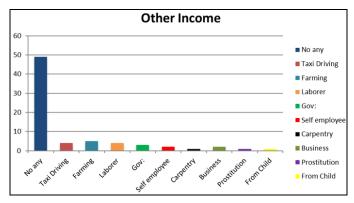


Fig 7: Methods of earning added income

The study-zone related sample illustrated that the businessmen involved in typical businesses of street hawking also occupied in several other income deriving actions based on the religious site and tourism as well, such as; working as hired three-wheeler drivers, self-employees, while also involved in brokering work as well as the profession of prostitution. Accordingly, it uncovered that there are traders within the study zone involved in socially ethical and also in unethical businesses.

Table 6: Nature of Govt. subsidies in receipt

Are you in receipt of Govt Subsidies?			
Yes	16	20.51%	
No		79.49%	
Total		100.00%	
If Yes through what source	If Yes through what sources?		
Receiving Samurdhi Assistance		81.25%	
Merit Allowance	1	6.25%	
Other	2	12.50%	
Total	16	100.00%	

Within the context of Sri Lankan society there are several state driven sources of financial or other schemes in focus of raising livelihoods or on welfare measures for needy citizens. It could be ascertained within the study zone that 20 % of families of respondents are qualified to receive subsidies and other assistance while, balance 79% does not receive any such assistance. In this setting the majority have not been eligible for such grants since there are effects owing to the higher income they earn.

Table 7: Existence of the generation-wise professions

Was there a member involved in a livelihood within this boundaries before you started your livelihoods			
Yes	44	56.41%	
No	34	43.59%	
Total	78	100.00%	

Results of the study affirmed that 56% of the majority of traders admitted that a family member had involved in his profession before his involvement. This instigate that family based professions bear a considerable influence either in selection or to involve in a profession in the context of rural economy.

Table 8: The nature of relationship of those involved in the profession or business prior to the involvement of the respondents as per the study sample

Relationship			
Mother	13	29.55%	
Father	14	31.82%	
Husband	6	13.64%	
Aunty	1	2.27%	
Cousin brother	1	2.27%	
Uncle	2	4.55%	
Daughter-In-Law	2	4.55%	
Grand father	1	2.27%	
Wife	1	2.27%	
Brother	3	6.82%	
Total	44	100.00%	

The percentage of professions those were commenced following the professions initiated and continued by parents, represents 61%. This asserts that the decision making on income earning activities has influence of socially accepted family and its economic activities.

Table 9: The diversity of Living means of previous members of those families responded as per the sample

Profession of Livelihoods		
Sale of flower packs	23	52.27%
Sale of cooked food	3	6.82%
Sale of toys / ornaments	2	4.55%
Sale of flowers		6.82%
Self-Employment		2.27%
Supporting services inside the shrine room		6.82%
Mixed sales		18.18%
Other		2.27%
Total	44	100.00%

Findings listed on above table illustrate that 100% of previous relatives had involved in professions related to the sacred site.

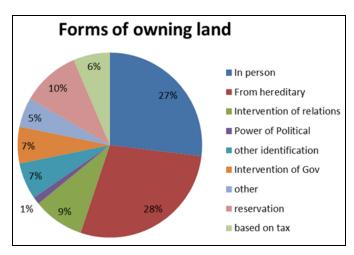


Fig 8: Nature of capturing the ownership of land

Varied nature of capturing of ownership of the land for unauthorized businesses within the sacred site could be identified. Therein, those occupied ownership of inherited land represents a higher percentage. Since, it is a natural cause that those hereditarily owned businesses are continued within hereditarily gained land. In this context traditionalism plays a vital role within the rural economic setting on decisive factors in pertinent to the foundation of ownership and also the profession is decided based on same.

Table 10: Usage of Alcohol / Smoking or Harmful drugs

Do you consume alcohol / drugs or smoking?			
Yes	22	28.20%	
No	56	71.79%	
Total	78	100.00%	

Information gathered disclosed the fact that rate of alcohol/drugs or smoking usage is 28%. A contributive factor for above scale of consumption of harmful drugs etc., is the influence and contribution of migrant communities to the

study area, from different parts of the country. Hence it is noticeable that behavioral pattern of migrant communities is an influential factor for spreading habits of the consumption of alcohol / drugs or smoking, in the rural regions.

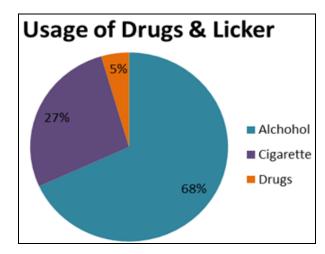


Fig 9: Status of the consumption of substances

It is noticeable that higher rate (68 %) of consumption of alcohol, while 27% are habituated on smoking as per the response of interviewees. Drug usage shows marginal 5% currently yet usage and spreading of harmful drugs is a growing menace in Sri Lanka.

6. Discussion

In consistent with the above data and findings of the Research it is implicit that the economic, social and cultural environment of street hawkers are structured in line with an inherited and their own formation. However, in reference to the higher percentage of 91% those entitled for daily earning of exceeding Rs. 500/= it is apparent that the land available for economic activities is a resource base for their livelihoods. In spite of the above facts, attempts were made through this research was to merely identify the sub culture of the traders. As explained by Albert K. Cohen in his theory of sub culture, those adolescents build an authority based on their short term aims mixing with varied groups. Similar to the said process, those traders who struggle to secure ownership of land being used for income activities used to form groups in order to secure their existence. Since, traders aware that individual approach is disadvantageous to them it is noticeable that they used to be formed into groups ot gangs.

- (26 year old youth; profession - Selling offering items).

One other factor emerged in the study was the prevalence of inherent characteristics within their groups. It was also noticeable that following above said features these groups of traders are allied into a subculture and by examining those sub cultural features it can be known to which degree that subculture has affected their existence.

1. Existence of daily practices and duties before they start their business related actions

Each trader entering into the street, irrespective of gender (male or female) (Sample- Female 40; Male 38) has inbuilt into their living pattern to practice an inherent series of religious activities which are intrinsic with Katharagama sacred site.

- "...... We are secured by the Katharagama God. We start our work only after worshiping the God..."
- 47 aged female trader living on selling flowers.

47% out of the sample stated that even before closure of businesses too, they worship the God as a regular practice.

2. Inbuilt relationship with the devotees

In this practice too, the traders used to follow certain rehearses. They also possess a tumult brain hence, following the habit of addressing any customer visiting his / her sales unit also noticing specific features of personality, status etc., Compassionate language they use to please the devotees in a similar fashion of each other was a common practice each of them adopted to attract the customers. They follow equal language but what was different is the mode of expression each of them used. Also when the devotees approach them to get specially decorated offering trays some of them used to bargain to reduce prices and this is not accepted by the traders and they disliked same. When such clients approach another trader the rejeted trader practice a system of signaling for second trader to state a higher price. It could be noted that such practice was followed by traders to stop any type of bargaining. Traders follow these types of practices since they know that clients do not want to face such defamatory happenings.

3. Method of transaction followed by traders were identical to them

All of them beleieved that mode of selling or attending transactions be managed in order to enable all the traders to earn income. Nevertheless, there were instances that whenever someone is found the opportunity to deviate from such moves they disregard others and follow own method.

It was also obervble that beggers were supposed to pay a certain amount to the leading businessman who maintains the authority. When the pricing was concerned all the traders were supposed to follow similar prises. Normally, fixing prices is decided unanimously. Prices can be slightly differed depending on the particular streets or the locations. When the women traders are concerned the practice of enabling others to access chances within the women traders was happened seldomly.

4. Existance of exclusive and iedenticle fashion of language

As mentioned earlier too, they used tumult language on trade activities. Among all of them whether, they are beggers, traders or those involved in any other economic activity used to address each other in a language so as to reflect relationship. No one addresses another using his or her name. Instead, they address other party by using Akka (elder sister), Aiya (elder brother), Duwa (daughter), Putha (son) while also

using rustic or mofussil language too just to display much closer friendship.

Among the other features, highest majority (95 %) held single political ideology. Accordingly, they consider a politician as their benefactor who or his ministry that had supported these traders by allocating their land for them to carry our trade activities.

When the leadership among the traders is concerned who ever a person enaged in frequent clashes with police and following other subcultural habits and who could evolve chivalry is the person considered as the leader among the traders.

For a new person to enter into the trade complex for businesses was not an easy task due to the difficulty to get concession of others. The sole expectation of each trader is to acquire a land closer to the religious site. Though they had organized into a united force for the sake of their existence some clashes could not be avoided. Similarly, the other reason for clashed was the illicit relationships. As per the details uncovered, a women who has engaged in an unlawful relationship she had owned a bigger status within the street compared to other women. Due to the feeling of jealous of other women on such female clashes were erupted having also created further small subcultures. Within the prevailed sub culture.

"......These guys pretend to others as living friendly, yet, they do not have such friendship. They are ready to kill each other even for a Rupee. ..."

- Women involved in selling flowers

7. Conclusion

Due to the extreme competitiveness prevails in commercial towns, and if in case a group who claimed ownership for a block of land, the biggest challenge they face is to get the confirmation to the ownership. The biggest challenge they face is. Even though, they are organized and formed unity within their inherited sub culture, the <u>conclusion</u> could be arrived at, that such unity cannot be prolonged though groups can function satisfactorly in some other social settings.

8. Recommendations

Since, prevalence of disunity or clashes among the business communities is a decisive factor linked to the ownership of businesses, an appropriate procedure must be introduced to surmount the ongoing problems.

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